



SENATOR

Karen Keiser

33RD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



I appreciate your letters and calls on legislative issues. Please let me know if I can help on matters before state agencies.

OLYMPIA OFFICE**338B John A. Cherberg Building****PO Box 40433****Olympia, WA 98504-0433****E-MAIL:****keiser_ka@leg.wa.gov****WEB SITE:****www.sdc.wa.gov/keiser.htm****PHONE:****(360) 786-7664****FAX:****(360) 786-1999****TOLL-FREE LEGISLATIVE****HOT LINE:****(800) 562-6000****COMMITTEES:**

- **Commerce & Trade**
(lead Democrat)
- **Financial Services, Insurance & Housing**
- **Health & Long-Term Care**

Dear Neighbors,

I am honored to represent our area in the Washington State Senate this legislative session. This year, I will be serving as a new member on the Health & Long-Term Care Committee, as well as the Commerce & Trade Committee and the Financial Services, Insurance & Housing Committee. My position on these panels will help me fight for decent health care, family-wage jobs, affordable housing and other issues that affect the lives of families in our area and around the state.

During this past summer and fall, I've received many suggestions and ideas for new legislation. I've drafted several bills, and despite being in the Senate's minority party, I look forward to forming the bipartisan coalitions that will positively influence policy and make legislative achievement possible.

I am introducing legislation to:

- prohibit predatory lending practices that lure borrowers with the promise of low interest rates but fail to fully disclose other enormous fees thousands of dollars higher than industry standards;
- provide mental health advance directives that will allow the mentally ill to determine their own treatment options before they suffer a crisis;
- establish minimum annual leave of 10 days for all full-time employees recognizing that everyone who works deserves a paid day off;
- exempt seniors from new state park entrance fees;
- limit property tax increases by the Port of Seattle, this year a staggering 37 percent, and transfer control of Sea-Tac Airport from the port to an new independent aviation authority;
- establish "taxpayer right to know" accountability on impact of current business tax exemptions.

These are just a few of my legislative proposals, and I will keep you posted on their status.

Please let me know how you feel about these and other issues before the Legislature by filling out the enclosed survey. I look forward to hearing your ideas. Keep in touch during the coming months.

Best Wishes,

Karen Keiser
State Senator
33rd Legislative District

Survey Inside >>



BALANCING THE STATE BUDGET WHILE PRESERVING SERVICES

We are still coping with tough times in Washington. The economy has yet to recover from the downturn in both technology and aerospace industries. Thousands of families still struggle to make ends meet, and good times of the 1990s seem a long way off. Our state still has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, and many of these workers will need support during retraining.

Just as many family budgets that have been hit by the recent economic downturn, the state budget is in serious trouble. Much of this legislative session will be occupied with closing the \$2.4 billion shortfall in the state's next two year budget. While we

must close this gap, it would be a profound mistake to cut or eliminate the very public services that more people rely on during these tough economic times. We must maintain a strong commitment to health care, education and job training, as well as emergency economic assistance to families in need. Also, we must continue to fund public safety and law enforcement agencies, and incarcerate violent criminals. There are no easy answers.

I do feel very strongly about fairness to state employees. Last year, state employees, not including those working for public schools, received no salary increases while being forced to

bear an increase in their health insurance premiums. At the same time, the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials, an independent board, approved a salary increase for legislators. I did not believe that was appropriate so I donated my salary increase to a nonprofit child care agency that serves state employees' families. I am proposing legislation this session to limit the increase of legislators' salaries to be no larger than that received by other state employees. If state employees are asked to sacrifice to balance the budget, so should legislators.

ISSUE SUMMARY AND VOTER SURVEY

PLEASE HELP ME SERVE YOU BETTER BY SHARING YOUR VIEWS WITH ME.

Shade Circles like this ● NOT like this ☒
Please do not write inside the margins.

This year legislators will be forced to balance many popular and necessary state functions. Not every priority will be able to receive full funding, and in fact, most will face budget cuts as we struggle to close a \$2.4 billion budget gap. If you were forced to support a single budget priority, would it be:

VOTER 1 VOTER 2

- ☐ ☐ a) EDUCATION—Public schools educate more than 1 million Washington children and state universities and colleges provide degree programs to more than 200,000 Washingtonians.
- ☐ ☐ b) HEALTH CARE—the Basic Health Plan, Medicaid and other programs provide health care for one in five Washington residents.
- ☐ ☐ c) PUBLIC SAFETY—the State Patrol, Department of Corrections, and other public safety agencies protect our communities.
- ☐ ☐ d) TRANSPORTATION—improving our transportation system will help move people and goods more quickly and improve our economic competitiveness.

Voters soundly defeated Referendum 51 in November. Some voters pointed to the lack of accountability at the Department of Transportation (DOT), highway projects that were only partially funded, transportation choices that received too little priority, and the current economic downturn when explaining why now is the wrong time to levy more highway funds. This session, I will propose keeping gas tax revenues in the county where they were paid in an effort to wean Eastern Washington of their current gas tax subsidy. How many of the following would you support:

VOTER 1 VOTER 2

- ☐ ☐ a) independent DOT performance audits to help ensure that existing funds are stretched as far as possible.
- ☐ ☐ b) a 5-cent gas tax increase enacted by the Legislature to fund new road construction.
- ☐ ☐ c) a 1 percent increase in the vehicle sales tax to fund mass transit and other transportation choices.
- ☐ ☐ d) postponing expanded investment in the transportation system until the economy improves.

As in past legislative sessions, health care will continue to be a major topic of debate. The Basic Health Plan (BHP), which provides subsidized health insurance for 140,000 lower income adults and children, is threatened with severe budget cuts. I am very concerned about the governor's proposal to drop 60,000 childless adults from the BHP, which would result in more people seeking costly emergency room care for preventable diseases. You may be surprised to learn that nearly two-thirds of families enrolled in the BHP include an employed adult. I am introducing a bill that would require employers of these enrollees to contribute to the BHP to share the costs of the program, but also to make it less attractive to drop employer-sponsored health-care coverage. Given the necessity to slow the rate of growth in health-care spending, would you support:

VOTER 1 VOTER 2

- ☐ ☐ a) eliminating Basic Health Plan benefits for low-income adults, even as thousands lose health coverage through their employer.
- ☐ ☐ b) establishing a preferred drug list and pooling consumer purchasing power to reduce the costs of a prescription drug benefit for those without private coverage.
- ☐ ☐ c) further limiting payments to health-care providers for treatment of patients who participate in state plans, despite worries that providers will simply refuse to see those patients.
- ☐ ☐ d) eliminate dental, hearing and vision benefits for low-income people on Medicaid.

I believe it is critically important to constantly review how are state agencies are functioning: whether they are using their budget wisely and being responsive to their customers—the taxpayers. How many of the following do you support:

VOTER 1 VOTER 2

- ☐ ☐ a) expanded independent performance audits to review how effectively and efficiently agencies accomplish their missions.
- ☐ ☐ b) top to bottom prioritization of all state activities to ensure that scarce budgetary resources are spent on the most pressing needs.
- ☐ ☐ c) additional outsourcing of current government activities to the private sector.
- ☐ ☐ d) streamlining and reforming agency regulations.

Several legislators are introducing proposals to expand revenues this biennium to reduce the number of painful budget cuts that must be made. Which options are acceptable to you:

VOTER 1 VOTER 2

- ☐ ☐ a) review the more than 450 existing tax exemptions and close obsolete tax loopholes (est. \$200-400 million).
- ☐ ☐ b) allow new forms of gambling and larger casinos (est. \$200 million).
- ☐ ☐ c) extend the sales tax to certain professional services, such as attorneys and consultants (est. \$750 million).
- ☐ ☐ d) other ideas:

Please let me know what other issues are of concern to you, or feel free to pass along your opinion about matters before the Legislature. I appreciate your feedback.



Place
First-Class
Postage
Here

TO: SEN. KAREN KEISER
PO Box 40433
Olympia, WA 98504-0433



Sign up!

SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY
EMAIL UPDATE!
You'll get the inside scoop on the
latest legislative news.

E-mail

LEGISLATIVE
UPDATE
AND VOTER
SURVEY FROM SENATOR
KAREN KEISER



The Washington State Legislature will be in session through the end of April.

WELCOME to all new 33rd District residents!

Sen. Karen Keiser
33rd LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
PO Box 40433
Olympia, WA 98504-0433

PRSRT STD
US Postage
PAID
Olympia, WA
Permit #133